

Appl. No. 10/658,029  
Amdt. dated May 12, 2004  
Reply to Office Action dated February 12, 2004

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of welding a plastic ferrule to an optical fiber comprising the steps of:

providing the combination of a plastic jacketed optical fiber and a plastic ferrule in such physical arrangement that an outer circumferential surface of the plastic fiber-jacket is in juxtaposed relationship to an inner circumferential surface of the plastic ferrule;

providing a layer of transitory material between and in contact with each of said juxtaposed jacket and ferrule which material is substantially more absorptive to radiation at a predetermined wavelength than the plastic materials of both the jacket and ferrule; and

irradiating the combination substantially at said predetermined wavelength to create a weld pool which includes said material ~~and the adjacent materials of said jacket and ferrule.~~

Claim 2 (original): The method of welding defined in claim 1 wherein the step of irradiating the combination creates a weld pool which includes said material and in substantially equal amounts and to substantially equal depths in the materials of said jacket and ferrule.

Claim 3 (original): The method of welding defined in claim 1 wherein the material of the ferrule is selected so as to be substantially transparent to the irradiation of said predetermined wavelength.

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Claim 4 (currently amended): In combination:  
an optical fiber having a polymeric layer circumferentially disposed  
theraround; and

extending circumferentially around said polymeric circumferential  
layer, a ~~second~~ layer of transitory material which is substantially more absorptive to  
radiation of a predetermined wavelength than the material of said polymer layer.

Claim 5 (new): The combination of claim 4 further including a plastic  
ferrule disposed over an end of the optical fiber in substantially surrounding and  
contacting relationship to said layer of transitory material.